

Board of Finance Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 7, 2014
Town Hall Meeting Room 1- 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chairman Rob Tarlov, Rob Esteve, Tom Kane, James McNair, John Ringo

Members Absent: Art Shilosky

Others Present: First Selectman Gregg Schuster; Selectman Rosemary Coyle; Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove; Fire Chief Walter Cox, Board of Education: Chair Ron Goldstein, Don Kennedy, Chris Bennett; Town Clerk Nancy Bray; Public Works Director Jim Paggioli; Registrars of Voters Dot Mrowka and Diana Giles; Treasurer Greg Cordova; John Jones; Tricia Dean; Gail Furman; Clerk Justin LaFountain

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting of the Board of Finance Meeting of Wednesday, May 7, 2014 to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **Additions to the Agenda- None.**
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
Motion by J. Ringo to approve the minutes of the Wednesday April 16, 2014 regular meeting. Seconded by R. Esteve. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
4. **Citizens' Comments-None.**
5. **RFQ/RFP For Auditors-Discussion and Possible Action:**
Chairman Tarlov stated that he, J. McNair, and Chief Financial Officer M. Cosgrove met and reviewed five proposals submitted by auditing companies. The proposals were reviewed for qualifications before discovering the associated price. The company the Town currently uses was determined to be one of the two best by the subcommittee and was the lowest bid. Chairman Tarlov asked for a motion to authorize the Chairman to sign the necessary contracts.
Motion by T. Kane to authorize the Chairman to sign any and all necessary contracts with McGladrey for three years with an option for three more. Seconded by J. Ringo. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
6. **Department Reports**
 - a. **Finance Department-None.**
 - b. **Treasurer-None.**
 - c. **Tax Collector:**
Chairman Tarlov noted that the current Town system makes it expensive for taxes to be paid online, and he would like to see it cheaper and more convenient. Chief Financial Officer M. Cosgrove said that this possibility is being explored.

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NANCY A. BRAY
TOWN CLERK
Nancy A. Bray

7. First Selectman's Report

a. Transfer Requests-None.

b. First Selectman's Update:

First Selectman G. Schuster stated that Stan Soby has been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as successor First Selectman upon G. Schuster's departure, effective May 30, 2014. He stated that Mike Caplet is also resigning from the Board of Selectmen, so there will soon be two vacancies.

The First Selectman also stated that the new tax collector, Don Phillips, will be starting work on Monday May 12, 2014. He mentioned that recent thefts at the Senior Center have led to security reviews of the building.

8. Correspondence:

Chairman Tarlov stated that correspondence was budget related and would be discussed during the budget discussion.

9. Liaisons: Reports:

J. McNair reported that at the Colchester Hayward Fire Department Monthly Officer's Meeting, it was discussed that two vehicles are currently in for service and that Chief Cox expressed concern that they are getting close to budgeted items. He also stated the museum will be opening soon, with an open house on May 17, 2014.

R. Esteve stated that the Board of Education Budget Committee met following the budget loss, and a variety of topics were discussed.

Chairman Tarlov stated that Youth Services will be holding a Summer Family Palooza fundraiser event on June 14, 2014. There will also be a Fun Mudder in the fall. He stated that they were concerned about a number of businesses in Town selling drug paraphernalia to the public regardless of age. Youth Services will be sending a letter to those businesses, and Sergeant R. Suchecki will bring it to the attention of the Police Commission. Two high school seniors will also soon be recognized for their community service involvement.

10. New Business

a. Budget-Discussion and Possible Action

Chairman Tarlov noted that Town Clerk N. Bray was in attendance to discuss various referendum related questions. N. Bray clarified that absentee ballots could not legally be mailed by the Town Clerk's Office when there is less than a three week window from when ballots are available until the date of the referendum. An application must be signed to get an absentee ballot. Chairman Tarlov stated that information about absentee voting will be included in next year's budget information blast.

Chairman Tarlov stated he received several letters expressing concern about various aspects of the budget.

J. Ringo stated that he would like to see a budget increase of closer to 2%. J. McNair agreed it has to be closer to that figure. T. Kane noted that the survey showed that the 85-95% of people would support a budget of less than 2% increase, and this vote shows the budget was not in the ballpark of what people wanted. R. Esteve stated that he believes the new cuts have to be bigger picture items, and not cutting several hundreds of dollars from many places.

Chairman Tarlov stated that the original proposed budget was a 2.94% increase. If it went to 2.25%, the Board of Education would have to cut \$177,500 and the Town would have to cut \$83,500. A 1.98% increase would mean a \$247,000 cut in the Board of Education and a \$102,000 cut in the Town Budget.

The Board was in agreement to pick one of these scenarios and review the necessary cuts. R. Esteve stated he would prefer to start at the 2.25% increase. T. Kane stated that if they start with the 1.98% and do not like some of the cuts, they can be added back in if desired.

The Board agreed to use the 1.98% figure. R. Esteve stated he would like to see those cuts be tangible and understandable by the public.

A discussion was had on the timing of the next steps. It was decided that the Board of Finance will hold a special meeting on Wednesday, April 14 at 6:30 PM, followed immediately by a Board of Selectmen meeting to send the proposed budget to Town Meeting. The Town Meeting will ideally be held on Wednesday May 21, and if passed the referendum will be held on Thursday May 29.

Chairman Tarlov stated that many people said they were not aware of the referendum taking place. John Jones expressed concern that citizens were not adequately informed. A discussion was had on how to better communicate the information to the public. Possible ideas included more signage, and electronic blasts from the school system (if legally allowed). J. McNair said that he believes the majority of people simply do not care, and R. Esteve noted that it was not a budget that was easy to get excited about.

11. Old Business-None

12. Citizens Comments:

Rosemary Coyle stated that she felt it was important to include new revenues the Town might be getting from the State of Connecticut into any new budget revisions.

13. Adjournment

Motion by J. McNair, seconded by J. Ringo to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 PM. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Justin LaFountain
Clerk